

CD 2005 --- 2



Thursday, January 27, 2005
12:10 pm, Walter Hall

Thursdays at Noon

MUSIC & POETRY

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)
Canticle III, Opus 55 - Still Falls the Rain
Canticle IV, Opus 86 - The Journey of the Magi

Scott Belluz, countertenor
Stephen Erickson, tenor
Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone
Gabriel Radford, horn
Bruce Ubukata, piano
Eric Domville, commentator

Biographies

Scott Belluz began his studies at the University of Toronto as a violinist before transferring into the Vocal Performance program as a baritone under the tutelage of Mary Morrison. Upon graduation, he was admitted to the Royal Academy of Music in London, England, where he completed a Master's Degree while performing extensively throughout the United Kingdom. Performances in the 2001 Aix-en-Provence festival led Scott to France where he was subsequently chosen to be a young artist at the Centre National D'Artistes Lyriques in Marseille. It was at this time he began singing as a countertenor and was soon engaged for numerous performances throughout Southern France including: the role of Medoro in Handel's *Orlando* at the Festival D'Antibes, the Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* in Aix-en-Provence, and recitals in St. Remy de Provence, Marseille, Avignon and Toulon. Upcoming engagements include a reprise of *Orlando* in the festivals of Lacoste and Chartres, France and a collaboration with Toronto composer Erik Ross on a new song cycle.

Eric Domville is a Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Toronto. His main scholarly interest is the life and works of W.B. Yeats. He is also a writer, lecturer and broadcaster on opera. Currently he is co-teaching a graduate course on Russian song and opera in the Faculty of Music. Prof. Domville has appeared numerous times as a commentator for the Music and Poetry series.

Stephen Erickson is quickly gaining the attention of audiences across Canada and Europe. Recent opera appearances have included Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* (Rinuccio), Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (Male Chorus), Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (Ernesto), and an evening of scenes from Prokofiev's *War and Peace* (Pierre Bezukhov). In his native Canada, he has performed Beethoven's Choral Fantasia with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Bach's Cantata BWV 112 with the Calgary Bach Festival, Haydn's *Creation* (Uriel) with Mount Royal Kantorei, Bach's Mass in B Minor and Saint Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio* with the Festival Chorus, Bach's Cantata BWV 4 with The Elmer Iseler Singers, the Toronto premiere of *Requiem For the Millennium* by Brian Finley, Gounod's *St. Cecilia Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. 2004 marked his return to Europe and his debut with the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme in Handel's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso ed il Moderato* at the Snape Proms. Previously he appeared in the 2002 *Europäisches Musikfest* in Stuttgart, Germany under the baton of Maestro Helmuth Rilling in Beethoven's *Fidelio* (*erste Gefangener*); a performance which was broadcast across Western Europe on *Deutsche Radio SWF*. Equally versatile as a recitalist, Mr. Erickson has sung at the prestigious Aldeburgh Connection where he has twice been featured in their Young Artist Recitals. Mr. Erickson will also be featured in recital as a scholarship recipient for the Wagner Society of Toronto. Further opera and concert engagements include Handel's *Semele* (Jupiter), Mozart's *Requiem* and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in the Ottawa Valley. Mr. Erickson received his Bachelor of Music from the University of Toronto in 2003 and will receive his Master of Music in Opera Performance from the Opera Division this June.

Gabriel Radford was born and raised in Toronto. He is currently Third Horn of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. His musical career began at a young age as a boy soprano, appearing as a soloist in the Canadian Opera Company's production of Mozart's *Magic Flute*. Choosing horn while still in primary school, he went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Performance at the University of Toronto, where he studied with Frederick Rizner. Moving to Boston, Massachusetts, he studied at the New England Conservatory of Music under Boston Symphony Orchestra member Daniel Katzen. In June 1998, at the age of 23, Gabe successfully auditioned for Associate Principal Horn of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Following three years in that position, he accepted an offer to become Acting Principal Horn. While in Winnipeg, he also held the positions of Principal Horn of both Music Barock and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra. Gabe is a devoted teacher. While in Winnipeg, he was Horn Instructor at the University of Manitoba, and traveled to North Dakota in the summers to instruct at the International Music Camp. Since moving to Toronto, he has given masterclasses at the University of Toronto and at the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, as well as teaching a studio of private horn students. He joined both the faculty of the University of Toronto and the Royal Conservatory of Music in September, 2004.

Baritone **Giles Tomkins'** extensive solo experience has included performances with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Opera In Concert, the Aldeburgh Connection, Queen of Puddings, St. Lawrence String Quartet, and Canadian Brass. No stranger to the operatic stage, his roles include *Don Alfonso* (Mozart's *Così fan tutte*), Budd (Britten's *Albert Herring*), Mr. Peachum (Britten's *The Beggar's Opera*), Colline (Puccini's *La Bohème*), Somnus (Handel's *Semele*), and Jupiter (Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*). He can be heard on the Naxos label with Toronto's Aradia Ensemble, featuring works by Charpentier, Rameau, and Vivaldi. His performance of Bethune in Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani* was praised by critic Paula Citron, noting his "sweet but manly sound...lovely phrasing and beautiful placement." He has studied with some of the world's finest musicians including Marlena Malas at the Chautauqua Summer Opera Institute, Roger Vignoles and Anthony Rolfe-Johnson at the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Russell Braun, Martin Isepp, and Stephen Ralls. This past summer, Mr. Tomkins sang the role of Figaro in the Banff Centre for the Arts production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He is currently pursuing his Master's degree at the University of Toronto, under the tutelage of Lorna MacDonald.

Bruce Ubukata has established a reputation as one of Canada's leading accompanists, working with singers such as Mary Lou Fallis in her successful one-woman shows and appearing with Catherine Robbin, Donna Brown, Gerald Finley and others, here in Canada and on tour in Europe. With Stephen Ralls, he is co-founder and artistic director of the Aldeburgh Connection, which presents regular concerts of vocal recital repertoire in Toronto and elsewhere. In addition to a long association with the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus, his other musical activities have included performances with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Canadian Opera Company. For many years, he was a coach and accompanist at the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh, England. His recordings include *Liebeslieder & Folksongs* for CBC Records and the Britten *Canticles* on the Marquis label. Mr Ubukata is also an accomplished organist and harpsichordist.

Still Falls the Rain

(THE RAIDS, 1940. NIGHT AND DAWN)

STILL falls the Rain —
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss —
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails
Upon the Cross.

Still falls the Rain
With a sound like the pulse of the heart that is changed to the
hammer-beat
In the Potter's Field, and the sound of the impious feet

On the Tomb:
Still falls the Rain
In the Field of Blood where the small hopes breed and
the human brain
Nurtures its greed, that worm with the brow of Cain.

Still falls the Rain
At the feet of the Starved Man hung upon the Cross.
Christ that each day, each night, nails there, have mercy
on us —
On Dives and on Lazarus:
Under the Rain the sore and the gold are as one.

Still falls the Rain —
Still falls the Blood from the Starved Man's wounded Side:
He bears in His Heart all wounds— those of the light
that died,
The last faint spark
In the self-murdered heart, the wounds of the sad un-
comprehending dark,
The wounds of the baited bear—
The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat
On his helpless flesh . . . the tears of the hunted hare.

Still falls the Rain —
Then — O Ile leape up to my God: who pulles me
doun — ? —
See, see where Christ's blood streames in the firmament:
It flows from the Brow we nailed upon the tree
Deep to the dying, to the thirsting heart
That holds the fires of the world— dark-smirched with
pain
As Caesar's laurel crown.

Then sounds the voice of One who like the heart of man
Was once a child who among beasts has lain —
' Still do I love, still shed my innocent light, my Blood,
for thee.'

EDITH SITWELL

Journey of the Magi

'A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.'
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation,
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky.
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.